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which were mammals nearly equaling the elephant in size, but with shorter limbs, and with a flexible nose as in the tapir, but no true proboscis. They lived in the lake basins of Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado in the early Miocene Tertiary period. Figure 19 represents a side view of the skull of *Brontotherium ingens* Marsh, one twelfth of the natural size, and Figure 20 is an outline of the skull and brain cavity of the same animal, one tenth of its natural size, showing the remarkably small size of the brain. On the plates are views of different parts of the skeleton and of casts of the brain cavity.

GEOGRAPHY AND EXPLORATION.

Is it Possible to Unite the Black Sea and the Caspian? — Major Wood answers this question in the affirmative in the *Geographical Magazine* for February. He says that though the present level of the Caspian Sea is about eighty-four feet below the ocean level, it must be remembered that the highest point in the Manytch Channel, connecting the Euxine and Caspian basins, is but twenty-four feet above ocean level. " Manifestly, therefore, if these twenty-four feet were cut through, the waters of the Sea of Azof would pass into the Caspian basin and fill it up. Nor would such an enterprise present the shadow of a difficulty to the engineering genius which has already brought into being the great excavators that were used on the Suez Canal.

" The result of the filling up of the Caspian basin would be the destruction of Astrakhan and of all other buildings situated below ocean level on the Caspian littoral, and the project therefore would not appear at first sight to be a desirable one." Its execution would increase the water-spread of the Caspian from an area of 140,000 square miles to one of 250,000 square miles, and provide an ocean route to the eastern shore of the Caspian, and thus aid in developing the civilization of Central Asia.

Ancient Geographers. — It is not too much to assert, says a writer in the *Geographical Magazine*, that all the geographical achievements of the age, stupendous as they are, have been virtually nothing more than a grand and successful filling-in of the vague outlines bequeathed to us by the past. The Suez Canal was the idea of Pharaoh-Necho; the establishing of a beaten track across the Isthmus of Panama, that of Cortez and Nuñez de Balboa; the Mont Cenis passage, that of Hannibal; the commercial highway across Central Asia, that of Alexander the Great; the diverting of the Oxus into another channel (which, however, is scarcely possible now), that of Octai Khan; the voyage eastward round the cape, that of Xerxes; the search for the source of the Nile, that of half a dozen Egyptian kings, as well as of their conqueror, Cambyses, centuries before the Christian era; the existence of great inland seas in South Africa, that of the Portuguese explorers of the sixteenth century, some of whom, if we are not mistaken, have got more than one of these new "discoveries" of ours marked on their maps! In short, we may say with the Irish school-master, when he found one of his own similes in Homer, "Curse thim ancients, they 've stolen all our best ideas!"

INUNDATION OF THE SAHARA. — The idea of converting the Western Sahara into an inland sea is discountenanced by Mr. E. G. Ravenstein, who thinks that the plan is premature. He claims that the natural outlets of the Sahara are Tripoli, Algiers, Morocco on the north, the Atlantic seaboard on the west, and the Senegal and Niger on the south. "It is by these roads the necessities of the inhabitants of the Sahara are supplied, and their surplus produce is exported, and they will suffice for a long time to come."

MAP OF PREHISTORIC RUINS IN COLORADO. — A Preliminary Map of Southwestern Colorado and Parts of the Adjacent Territories, showing the Location of Ancient Ruins, issued by the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, F. V. Hayden in charge, will be found of much use by archæologists and travelers, as it gives the localities of the ancient rock ruins and cliff-houses discovered by the survey.

MICROSCOPY.[1]

SAN FRANCISCO MICROSCOPICAL SOCIETY. — This working society now numbers about forty active members, and its annual receptions and semi-monthly meetings are well sustained. During the past year it has commenced the formation, by purchase and donation of books and subscriptions to magazines, of a suitable library, and has added to its supply of apparatus a Nachet microscope whose one-eighth objective, which has no collar adjustment, with Nachet's oblique condenser, resolved promptly and easily into beads No. 19 of Möller's test-plate. Among the notable additions to the cabinet of slides are a series of slides of the wall rocks of the gold-bearing veins of California; a series of sections of the woods of California; a slide of the curious diatom, *Schizonema Grevillii*, remarkable for its great external resemblance to some forms of algæ, the frustules of which were contained in a regular tubular frond, in which they were living when found, and up and down the canal of which they were seen to move; a slide of crystals of salt obtained by slow evaporation from the tear of a child; and a fragment of photographic paper mounted in balsam to exhibit the minute specks which are so annoying to the photographer, and which appeared as white spots containing a dark nucleus of an arborescent crystalline formation, black oxide of manganese being believed to be the cause of the spots, and hydrochloric acid being suggested as a possible means of removing them. The work of the society seems to be mainly directed to the legitimate natural history applications of the microscope, though not without some

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[1] This department is conducted by DR. R. H. WARD, Troy, N. Y.